

Haverford College

Haverford Scholarship

Faculty Publications

Classics

2008

Texts and Culture in Late Antiquity: Inheritance, Authority, and Change [book review]

Bret Mulligan

Haverford College, bmulliga@haverford.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarship.haverford.edu/classics_facpubs

Repository Citation

Mulligan, Bret. "Texts and Culture in Late Antiquity: Inheritance, Authority, and Change (The Classical Press of Wales, 2007)" by J.H.D. Scourfield in *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* (BMCR 2008.08.17).

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Classics at Haverford Scholarship. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of Haverford Scholarship. For more information, please contact nmedeiro@haverford.edu.

Bryn Mawr Classical Review

Bryn Mawr Classical Review 2008.08.17

J.H.D. Scourfield (ed.), *Texts and Culture in Late Antiquity: Inheritance, Authority, and Change*. Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales, 2007. Pp. xii, 346. ISBN 978-1-905125-17-3. \$89.50.

**Reviewed by Bret Mulligan and William Wren Lebowitz, Haverford College
(bmulliga@haverford.edu)**

Word count: 4306 words

[Contributors and titles are listed at the end of the review.]

This is an ambitious collection that merits consideration not only by scholars who specialize in the diverse authors and topics discussed therein, but also by those interested in reception and late antique intellectual culture generally. Introducing the volume, its adept editor J.H.D. Scourfield laments that the "balkanization" of the study of the intellectual culture in late Antiquity has led to an academic climate in which "classical/classicizing, philosophical, and patristic literature may pay each other visits, but still inhabit essentially different territory" (vii). This collection, then, represents an attempt to encourage a move away from this scholarly fragmentation towards "a view of the textual world of late Antiquity which sees it as a single land" (vii). Uniting these sundry essays--which span geography, grammarians, classicizing occasional poetry, Christian cento and paraphrase literature, Neoplatonism, Christian views of the classical tradition, and monasticism--is a common engagement with "texts of special authority", in particular Homer, Virgil, Plato, and the Bible (vii). The topical and methodological diversity typical of an edited volume thus becomes one of the advantages of this collection, which, if not panoptic, nevertheless illustrates the impressive range of reception opportunities available to writers in late Antiquity and provides a sample of the approaches scholars are taking to the field.

Essays in the volume discuss texts from throughout the Roman Empire, dating from the middle of the third to the middle of the fifth century CE--although, unsurprisingly, many of the contributions focus on the flourishing literary culture of the late fourth and early fifth centuries. Early versions of six of the volume's thirteen chapters were delivered at the inaugural meeting of the Celtic Conference in Classics held at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth in September 2000, but this is not merely a conference volume. The remaining seven essays were written specifically for this collection. Upfront, it must be emphasized that, despite the occasional quibble or question posed below, the overall quality of this volume is outstanding. Every contribution is intellectually serious, provides extensive and substantive footnotes, and is

supported by a substantial bibliography. The methodological approach taken by the essays and the collection could best be characterized as traditional and philological, with scant mention of contemporary reception theory. This absence is only rarely felt in the individual contributions, but it does suggest a possible avenue for future studies in the area. The prose throughout is lucid and infelicities of style or usage are laudably rare and trivial.¹ The physical quality of the book is high, with crisp printing on glossy stock, a durable cover, and handsome dust jacket.

The first essay, J.H.D. Scourfield's "Textual inheritances and textual relations in late Antiquity", eloquently summarizes the collection's essays, noting how they illustrate the common and varied approaches taken by late-Antique authors to their textual inheritance. Scourfield opens by briefly recounting how the scholarly discourse on late Antiquity has evolved from one that emphasized decline, derivation, and cultural conflict ("the language of coming-to-be and passing-away" (2)), to one that views the period through the prism of transformation as a "complex of events in which both chance and design had a part, which moved forward by degrees, and which involved accommodation as well as conflict" (2). Although the purported neutrality of this approach has been questioned recently, its liberating effect on discussions of literary and intellectual culture in late Antiquity is well demonstrated in this volume.²

In "A New Created World: Classical Geographical Texts and Christian Context in Late Antiquity", Mark Humphries identifies what he sees as an "apparent paradox" in classical and Christian geographic texts: both share a view of the world as consisting of a space of Roman provinces and barbarian peoples grouped around the Mediterranean and surrounded by Ocean (54), yet this equivalent space supports different ideological perspectives. To Humphries, therefore, Symmachus' famous appeal to religious toleration in the *Third Relation* ("We see the same stars, and share the same sky...") is based on a false premise, as the Christian conception of the cosmos differed from that of Symmachus in significant ways. Despite the opening emphasis on intellectual conflict, Humphries details the elements adopted by Christians from classical geographies, taking as an example the Hereford *mappamundi*, which represents the world as a creation of a Christian god, yet includes references to Augustus and other classicizing elements.³ After surveying the geographical tradition of the early Roman empire in which Rome's dominance over world was seen "as reflecting the design of the gods for humankind" (43), Humphries argues that early Christians saw the "world as the stage upon which was played out a mighty cosmic drama" (40). As a result, Christian geographies place Jerusalem at the center of the world and reveal a general interest in lands of the Bible at the expense of the West. As a case study of the transition from pagan to Christian geography, Humphries compares the *Expositio Totius Mundi et Gentium* and *Descriptio Totius Mundi*, which seems to be an abbreviated version of the *Expositio* (46), revealing how the *Descriptio* expunges most allusions to pagan cult (49) and introduces relevant biblical material, such as when it equates the *Expositio*'s idealized land of the "Camarini" with the Garden of Eden (49-50). Humphries concludes with a look at how the geography of Orosius serves to "take the world of the Roman empire and make it a creation of the Christian god" (54). Christian geography, therefore, "was a reflection of God's design for the world" (56). This is remarkably similar to the view in classicizing geographers, albeit focused on a different place (Italy/Rome) and a different divinity. Is this ideological difference? I am left to wonder whether the two traditions manifest different intellectual frameworks, or if Christian geography only shifts its focus within a world that nevertheless remains organized in the same way. Nevertheless, this chapter

abounds in supporting and contextual information and expertly guides the untutored through unfamiliar terrain.

Anna Chahoud's "Antiquity and Authority in Nonius Marcellus" outlines how Nonius, whose encyclopedic dictionary *De Compensiosa Doctrina* preserves many Latin authors of the third and second centuries BCE, effectively equates antiquity (*antiquitas*, *vetustas*) with authority (*auctoritas*) when evaluating language. Including as it does a survey of Nonius' (largely conjectural) biography and his place in the Roman lexicographical tradition, Chahoud's chapter offers a useful introduction to Nonius and contemporary grammarians.⁴ In sampling Nonius' technique, Chahoud emphasizes his appeal to the authority of Varro and Virgil in particular, and how subsequent imperial authorities are either omitted entirely or condemned as unreliable (81). As Scourfield notes in his introductory essay, this has the effect of reducing "the gap between his own time and that of the *veteres*, more easily suggesting a shared temporality (and a shared culture) without any loss in the authority" (7). Chahoud concludes with the useful reminder that although Nonius was more an "enthusiastic compiler" than a critical thinker, his "misinterpretations, distortions, and even blunders are emblematic of the author's attitude and bring us closer to his identity" (83).

In "More Roman than the Romans of Rome: Virgilian (Self-) Fashioning in Claudian's *Panegyric for the Consuls Olybrius and Probinus*" Stephen Wheeler provides a rich and detailed exposition of how Claudian creatively deploys epic elements within the framework of traditional panegyric, and how this process underscores Claudian's promotion of himself as a second Virgil. Wheeler investigates this process in Claudian's first panegyric (*Ol. Prob.*), which was delivered in 395 CE in the aftermath of Theodosius' victory at the Battle of Frigidus. Alan Cameron, in his seminal monograph on Claudian, famously distinguished the *Ol. Prob.* from Claudian's later political works composed at Milan in the court of Honorius.⁵ In seeking to "lay to rest Cameron's untenable assertion" that *Ol. Prob.* is a conventional panegyric (100), Wheeler analyzes Claudian's allusions to Virgil, focusing in particular on three sections of the poem: 1) its *proemium* (vv. 1-9); 2) its description of the shield of personified Roma (vv. 94-99); and 3) the embedded panegyric delivered by the personified Tiber (vv. 205-62). After reviewing likely models for Claudian's panegyric and summarizing the poem, Wheeler dispenses with the question of whether the poem is primarily a panegyric or an epic in favor of a new approach, proposing to "read Claudian's allusions to classical authors in a systematic way to see if a meaningful literary-historical pattern emerges" (104). Careful to acknowledge the presence of other potential intertexts, Wheeler persuasively argues that Virgil provides the primary frame of reference in the three sections he discusses. He notes in particular the centrality of *Aeneid* 8 and *Eclogue* 4, the latter of which Wheeler suggests allowed Claudian to play a double game, nodding to the *Eclogue's interpretatio Christiana* (117) while he "revives the poem's secular meaning, by recasting his (Christian) patrons in the role of the Virgilian *puer*" (110)--in effect demonstrating how the Roman aristocracy could become Christian without abandoning secular traditions (117). Discussion of intent from allusion is of course a treacherous business, but Wheeler's treatment throughout is cautious and well-reasoned. Drawing inspiration from Servius' contemporary understanding of the *Aeneid* as a panegyric of Augustus, Wheeler sees Claudian as fashioning himself as an inheritor of the project Virgil announces in the opening of *Ecl.* 4 "to subsume the tradition of heroic epic within the form of panegyric and to make panegyric the culmination of the epic tradition" (120). One quibble: Wheeler's assertion that the work's "title

plainly indicates Claudian was working within the occasion-specific genre of panegyric" (99) finds support in some manuscripts (Z, J3) but not all (J6, F21, A2, *Exc. Gyr.*), and the authority of such titles is, in any case, dubious.

Roger P.H. Green's "Birth and Transfiguration: Some Gospel Episodes in Juvenecus and Sedulius" offers a valuable contribution to the study of classicizing Christian hexameter verse. After situating Juvenecus' *Evangeliorum Libri Quattuor* (c. 330) and Sedulius' *Paschale Carmen* (c. 425-450) as part of a cohort of late antique Christian authors who seized on "the potential advantages in presenting the faith in the metrical forms beloved of the Roman educated elite" (135), Green provides close readings of two similar episodes in both works: 1) the angelic appearance to the shepherds and their visit to Bethlehem (Juvenecus 1.155-80; Sedulius 2.35-72), and 2) the Transfiguration (Juvenecus 3.316-42; Sedulius 3.273-92). For each passage, Green provides the source-text from the New Testament, and then the corresponding passages of each author under consideration, along with a literal translation of each passage.⁶ Correcting the received judgment of Jerome that Juvenecus rendered the New Testament "almost word for word" (*paene ad verbum*), Green demonstrates "Juvenecus' tendency to rearrange, and... tidy up the original" (146), in particular by adding epic, specifically Virgilian, coloring and subtly altering speeches. Sedulius, in contrast, is "far more selective" (146) while at the same time his "radically pruned" narrative (157) admits "commentary, citation of other Scriptures, and personal meditation" (149). Evaluating the two works, Green sees a transition "between biblical text and biblical commentary" (158). While Juvenecus' more faithful rendition of the New Testament "uses, consciously or not, some standard interpretations of his age" (158), Green provocatively connects Sedulius' "highly theological, and even polemical" work (158) to the sermon-commentary (159). Green concludes with cautious speculation on the readership and authority such works would have enjoyed, noting in particular their engagement with Virgil while remaining cautious about the interpretative significance of such intertexts.

In his insightful chapter, "Virgil, Christianity, and the *Cento Probae*", Scott McGill reminds us that, despite the "brute condescension and contempt" of many modern critics,⁷ Christian centos "are arresting if eccentric manifestations of the interplay between ancient Christianity and classical culture" (173). Seeking to explicate ancient interpretations of Proba's *Cento*, McGill provides a close reading of an anonymous scribe's introduction to the *Cento* found in a fifteen-verse epistle to the eastern Roman emperor Arcadius.⁸ To the scribe, whose assessment of cento is the most positive to survive from Antiquity (181), Proba has "changed Virgil for the better" (*mutatus in melius*) by "Christianizing his non-Christian verses" (175). McGill explores how the scribe's interpretation differs from that of Proba herself, who in the introduction to her *Cento* claimed that her intermediation revealed the Christian themes sung by Virgil (*pia munera Christi*, v. 23). Such fashioning of Virgil as a "Christian without Christ" is openly condemned by Jerome in a (somewhat obscure) passage in *Letter 53*, in which he assails the imputation of Christian content to non-Christians. McGill analyzes the context of Jerome's rebuke to reveal that he does not criticize "the cento *per se*, but considers 'puerilia' an interpretation [sic] of Proba's work which bestows Christian status on Virgil" (179)--an unorthodox interpretation, but well-supported by McGill and consistent with Mohr's reconstruction of Jerome's complex attitude towards classical literature (and women) articulated later in this volume (ch. 12).⁹ Noting a parallel with Juvenecus' claim to superiority over Homer and Virgil because of the content of his *Evangeliorum Libri IV* (see ch. 5 in this volume), McGill contextualizes the

scribe's interpretation of the *Cento* as part of a Christian poetics in which "excellence of form was a secondary feature of poetry, and a means of dressing up a Christian message to make it more appealing, persuasive, or memorable to audiences, both pagan and Christian" (182).

Mary Whitby's "The Bible Hellenized: Nonnus' *Paraphrase* of St. John's Gospel and 'Eudocia's' Homeric Centos" offers an informative mix of general and specific observations. After briefly surveying contemporary Latin paraphrasts and Christian centoists and the state of textual evidence for the Greek works (195-96), Whitby details the literary context of the mid-fifth century in which Nonnus' paraphrase and the 'Eudocian' cento were produced (195-96). For each author under analysis, Whitby discusses the evidence for authorship and dating and provides a close reading of the Doubting Thomas episode--a representative, if "relatively uncomplicated example" (218). In the Nonnan paraphrase, she finds that the "Gospel original is expanded to incorporate exegetical material" (206) and is "aimed at a sophisticated audience able to appreciate its complex allusion and artistry" (199). Confirming that the author of the paraphrase is the same Nonnus who composed the *Dionysiaca* (200), Whitby details Nonnus' sophisticated use of adjectives and direct speech. The use of adjectives demonstrates a "carefully contrived and allusive purpose... with links both to classical literature and to contemporary theological discussions" (206); his use of direct speech, in contrast to the *Dionysiaca*'s emphasis on declarative monologues, preserves the conversational style found in the Gospel. Professing to be a "Doubting Thomas" on the authorship of the Homeric centos (216), Whitby outlines the complex process of revision that leads her to caution against associating the extant centos with Eudocia alone. To illuminate the difficult nature of the text, Whitby compares the Doubting Thomas episodes found in the Paris and Iviron manuscripts, paying special attention to the nature of the cento process and the relationship between the centos and their Biblical source material. Tentatively suggesting that the shorter Paris version "could be seen as a return to the dilettante composition of cento" (217), Whitby concludes that the Homeric centos "focus on literary craftsmanship and artistic intent, so as to illustrate the survival and revival of Hellenism for the elucidation of Christian texts" (218). A short appendix detailing the various recensions of the Homeric centos (the tenth-century Paris manuscript, the fourteenth-century Iviron manuscript, and an as yet unpublished group of manuscripts) rounds out the chapter. The chapter is a good example of the valuable synthetic considerations made possible by the publishing of (much needed) modern editions of late antique texts.[10](#)

In "Plotinus and the Myths of Love", Andrew Smith seeks to temper the (prevailing?) opinion that Plotinus' engagement with myth is unimportant to his discussion of philosophy.[11](#) To illustrate this, Smith investigates how Plotinus employs myth in the treatise *On Love* (*Enneads* 3.5), his only treatise "based entirely on myth" (233), in which Plotinus discusses the two apparently contradictory accounts of the birth of Eros found in Plato's *Phaedrus* and *Symposium*. Smith ably demonstrates that Plotinus' fundamental interest in interpreting these two myths is not merely in reconciling contradiction, but in providing "the reaffirmation of some of his major metaphysical concepts: in particular the relationship of Intellect to Soul and the rediscovery of that inner urge which is the stimulus to the ascent of the individual soul" (234). For those unconcerned with Neoplatonic metaphysics, Smith's discussion at the end of the chapter of how *On Love* enacts Plotinus' own understanding of the utility of myth will be of the greatest interest. For Plotinus, the constituent parts of myth can "be exploited and adapted to point to distinctions between entities which in reality... remain one" (236)--an intriguing variation

on the allegorical reading of myth, which Smith suggests has parallels with Plotinus' views of the limitations of verbal discourse (240-41).

In "John of Stobi on the Soul," John Dillon argues that Stobaeus' own views can be gleaned from his practice of anthologizing ancient wisdom from Homer to Themistius. Stobaeus' anthology presents a particular challenge to interpretation in that, unlike other anthologists, he only presents quotations of other authors without any commentary. Nevertheless Dillon argues that Stobaeus' deliberate arrangement of quotations reveals that he was a "post-Iamblichean Pythagoreanizing Neoplatonist" (249). Dillon's point is not that Stobaeus has distinct and new philosophical views, but that he has philosophical views at all. To demonstrate this, Dillon chooses to analyze Chapter 49 ('on the soul') for two reasons. First, as the longest chapter in the anthology, it provides the best opportunity for assessing Stobaeus' own views on any one subject; secondly, Dillon argues persuasively that the later chapters evince more of Stobaeus' own ordering and arranging, unlike earlier chapters, which were largely borrowed from other anthologies. After summarizing the whole of Stobaeus' work leading up to Chapter 49, Dillon proceeds to outline the chapter, noting that Hermes Trismegistus is prominent at its beginning and end, surrounding numerous quotations from Plato, Porphyry, Iamblichus, as well as a small excerpt attributed to Aesaras. Dillon thinks that by carefully arranging a handful of sources throughout this particular chapter, Stobaeus conveys his own belief in "an immaterial soul, partless in itself, but distinguishable into various faculties, rational and irrational, in its embodied states" (258). In contrast to those who would pillage Stobaeus as a valuable source of lost works, Dillon makes an admirable attempt at reading the anthology as a text in its own right. Although much of this article is (self-consciously) speculative, Dillon's arguments about Stobaeus' work are well made and this essay offers an interesting approach to understanding the beliefs of an author who only arranged quotations from other sources.

R.M. van den Berg's "What's in a divine name? Proclus on Plato's *Cratylus*," explores Proclus' theological interpretation of Plato's *Cratylus*, a work (ostensibly) about names that postulates an early linguistics. Van den Berg notes that this particular Proclean commentary has been generally ignored by scholars because it appears disorderly compared to his others and because it dwells on the parts of the dialogue that appear superfluous to us: the large section of fanciful etymologies. There is also the curious assertion in the commentary that the *skopos* of the dialogue is the generative activity of souls to produce likeness, an idea not explicit in the dialogue. Attempting to explain these curious features of Proclus' commentary, van den Berg shows how Proclus develops a mystical reading of Plato that is at odds with the positions articulated in the dialogue. In direct contrast to the Platonic relegation of names in the hierarchy of knowledge, van den Berg argues that Proclus develops his own theory of names that explains the divine names' usefulness in rituals, and states that even human-made names can be instructive if they are attained through proper reasoning (274). Proclus disregards Socrates' assertion that an investigation of names is only the investigation of the beliefs of the people using them. Instead, van den Berg argues that Proclus develops a mystical understanding of naming that creates images of the gods as reflections of "the Forms themselves insofar as they are innate in us" (270). Whether attained through inspiration, or through the use of proper reasoning, Proclus argues that names are the images by which humans are able to contemplate the gods. Van den Berg's ambitious and detailed article fashions a coherent interpretation of Proclus' jumbled (and apparently unfinished) commentary on the *Cratylus*.

Andrew Louth's contribution, "Pagans and Christians on Providence", sketches the development of classical and Hellenistic doctrines of *πρόνοια*, or Providence, and its reception in early Greek Christian theology. Louth outlines how Plato's vision--in the *Laws*, *Timaeus*, *Republic* (Myth of Er), and *Phaedrus*--of a rational universe in which human destiny results from the differing choices of souls (282) gives way first to a lack of interest in Providence by Aristotle and then the Stoics' deterministic cosmos, ordered for the human good but with no space for free choice (284). After discussing how early Christians such as Clement, Origen, and Hippolytus vigorously attacked the Stoic conception of fate or destiny (*εἰμαρμένη*) and its association with divination and astrology (285-86), Louth demonstrates how this opposition did not prevent the deployment of Platonist doctrine by Origen, who uses *Republic* 10 to refute the Gnostic doctrine of the wicked creation (287-88), and Nemesios of Emessa, who is "keen to identify the truth with what he regards as Plato's doctrine" (292), despite the conflicts between Christian theology and the Platonic tradition of *εἰμαρμένη*. The centrality of the Platonic Myth of Er in these discussions is particularly fascinating. Louth concludes with a glance at Plotinus' three treatises on fate and predestination (*Enneads* 3.1-3), noting that Plotinus and his successors (e.g. Sallustius, Hierocles, Proclus) become progressively more interested in Providence. To Louth this coincidence of interest between Neoplatonist and Christian thought stands as "evidence for the greater appeal of religious considerations in the period we call late Antiquity" and signals a "deepening interest in the intelligible world" (293).

In "Jerome, Virgil, and the captive maiden: the attitude of Jerome to Classical literature", Ann Mohr declines to circumscribe Jerome's attitude towards classical literature by the apparently contradictory declarations of antipathy in *Letter* 22 (384 CE: "*Ciceronianus... non Christianus*") and praise in *Letter* 70 (397 CE: "*quia omnes paene omnium libri... eruditionis doctrinaeque plenissimi sunt*"). Recalling that Jerome was educated by Aelius Donatus and that Jerome's connection with Virgil was "part of Jerome's blood and bone" (318), Mohr demonstrates that Jerome's "early rejection not as long-lasting nor his later acceptance as liberal-minded and enthusiastic as portrayed" (312). By intelligently situating Jerome's statements within their proper historical and rhetorical contexts, Mohr reminds us that Jerome's famous description of the dream in *Letter* 22 is not a condemnation of classical literature *per se*, but an illustrative example from a long epistle offering advice to Julia Eustochium on how to maintain her vocation to virginity (303). *Letter* 70, in contrast, is a polemical defense of the precept that Christians "might use pagan writings in order to further Christian ends" (307). Central to Mohr's discussion is Jerome's allegorical reading of the story of the captive maiden (*Deuteronomy* 21.10-13) in *Letters* 20 and 70. Like the captive maiden, classical literature can be useful for Christian ends provided that it is shorn of what may make it attractive or dangerous (312). Mohr's reference to the similarities between Jerome's discussion of women and classical literature is particularly intriguing. Mohr concludes by explicating several examples of Jerome's allusion to Virgil in both personal counseling and doctrinal disputes, with particular the Dido and Aeneas episode from *Aeneid* 4.

Finally, the contribution of Richard J. Goodrich, "John Cassian, the *instituta Aegyptorum*, and the apostolic church", delineates one way in which textual traditions can be manipulated to support a writer's claim to authority--in this case how Cassian, an unknown foreigner, developed the authority among his Gallic audience to promulgate a rigorous version of the ascetic life that was at odds with that advocated by contemporary western writers. Goodrich

argues that Cassian presented himself as an experienced disciple of the Egyptian Desert Fathers, from whom "he had learned an ancient and enduring system, unlike the Gauls, who simply made up ascetic practices, or other non-Gallic writers such as Jerome, who had substituted eloquence for experience" (324). Central to Cassian's claim to authority was his creation of an ancient canon of Egyptian monastic practice, the *instituta Aegyptorum*. Although Egyptian cenobitic practice demonstrated many of the variations that Cassian sought to suppress in Gaul (334 fn. 17), Goodrich traces how Cassian invents a history of Egyptian monasticism in his first work, the *Institutes of the Coenobia*. By manipulating narratives from Philo's *On the Contemplative Life*, Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, and the Egyptian tale known as the "Rule of the Angel", Cassian fabricated the image of a cohesive, authoritative monastic rule in Egypt, linked to the origins of Christianity and enjoying divine sanction (333).

Contents

1. J.H.D. Scourfield, "Textual inheritances and textual relations in late Antiquity" (1-32)
2. Mark Humphries, "A New Created World: Classical Geographical Texts and Christian Context in Late Antiquity" (32-68)
3. Anna Chahoud, "Antiquity and Authority in Nonius Marcellus" (69-96)
4. Stephen Wheeler, "More Roman than the Romans of Rome: Virgilian (Self-) Fashioning in Claudian's *Panegyric for the Consuls Olybrius and Probinus*" (97-134)
5. Roger P.H. Green, "Birth and Transfiguration: Some Gospel Episodes in Juvenecus and Sedulius" (135-172)
6. Scott McGill, "Virgil, Christianity, and the *Cento Probae*" (173-194)
7. Mary Whitby, "The Bible Hellenized: Nonnus' *Paraphrase* of St. John's Gospel and 'Eudocia's' Homeric Centos" (195-232)
8. Andrew Smith, "Plotinus and the Myths of Love" (233-246)
9. John Dillon, "John of Stobi on the Soul" (247-260)
10. R.M. van den Berg, "What's in a divine name? Proclus on Plato's *Cratylus*" (261-278)
11. Andrew Louth, "Pagans and Christians on Providence" (279-298)
12. Ann Mohr, "Jerome, Virgil, and the captive maiden: the attitude of Jerome to Classical literature" (299-322)
13. Richard J. Goodrich, "John Cassian, the *instituta Aegyptorum*, and the apostolic church" (323-338)

Notes:

- [1.](#) [This footnote deleted at the request of the author of the review.]
- [2.](#) For a skeptical account of the neutrality of the "transformation" schema, see Ward-Perkins 2005: 3-10.
- [3.](#) Although dating from the thirteenth century, the *mappamundi* claims to be based on the geography presented in Orosius' *Contra Paganos*, which leads Humphries to declare that the "Hereford *mappamundi* can be said to represent in visual form a Christian cosmological and geographical tradition stretching back to the same time that Symmachus had claimed that pagans and Christians were surrounded by the same stars, sky, and earth" (37). Generally speaking, this connection is unobjectionable, although Symmachus and Orosius are not exactly contemporaries, Orosius being over forty years Symmachus' junior and writing the aftermath of the quite consequential final decade of the fourth and first decade of the fifth centuries.
- [4.](#) Given the diffuse and conjectural nature of the evidence, it is not surprising that the exact nature of Nonius' identity remains nebulous; nevertheless, Chahoud's claim that Nonius' vision of a *Latinitas* rooted in an "idealized model of literary language" (85) should be connected with the rapidly changing cultural order of the late-fourth and early-fifth centuries has a certain attraction.
- [5.](#) Cameron 1970: 32-33.
- [6.](#) Green recognizes the difficulty of knowing which biblical text these authors were working from, but that "since a choice must be made" he provides the 'European' or 'Italian' version and notes significant variants from the 'African' version when necessary (137).
- [7.](#) As McGill notes, one need only mention Shackleton Bailey's brusque dismissal of the genre as *opprobria litterarum* (1982, iii).
- [8.](#) This volume succinctly summarizes and offers relevant bibliography on the controversy over the identity of the epistle's addressee. McGill argues in favor of Arcadius (186, n. 6); Whitby in favor of Theodosius II (216, n. 128).
- [9.](#) As McGill notes (189, n. 34), his critique differs from those of Springer 1993 and Stevenson 2005.
- [10.](#) E.g. recent work on the Nonnan paraphrase by E. Livrea and his pupils and on the Homeric centos by A-L. Rey (1998) and M.D. Usher (1999).
- [11.](#) E.g. Armstrong 1966-88, vol. 3, 176 n.1

[Comment on this review](#) in
the BMCR blog

[Read Latest](#)

[Index for
2008](#)

[Change Greek
Display](#)

[Archives](#)

[Books Available
for Review](#)

[BMCR
Home](#)

HTML generated at 13:33:04, Friday, 03 April 2009